

Remarks

Applicants thank the Examiner for his careful consideration of this application.

Reconsideration of this application is now respectfully requested in view of the amendments above and the following remarks.

Claims 1-5, 8-14, 27, 29-33, and 38-40 are now pending in the application, with Claims 1, 9, 32, and 38 being the independent claims. Claim 26 has been cancelled without prejudice to pursue its subject matter subsequently. Claims 27 and 29-33 have been amended.

Applicants acknowledge, with gratitude, the allowance of Claims 1-5, 8-14, and 38-40, as well as the indication of allowable subject matter in Claim 32.

At Pages 2-3, the Office Action rejects Claims 26, 27, 29, 31, and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Iwata et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,876,055). At Pages 3-4, the Office Action rejects Claim 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwata et al. in view of Wong et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,246,094). While Applicants do not concur with these rejections, Applicants have elected to cancel Claim 26, to incorporate the limitations of Claim 26 into Claim 32, and to amend Claims 27, 29-31, and 33 to depend from Claim 32. In view of this, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of Claim 26 is moot and that Claims 27 and 29-33 are allowable in view of the indication of allowable subject matter in Claim 32. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of all remaining objections and rejections and an indication of the allowance of all remaining claims.

While Applicants do not necessarily concur with the Office Action's characterizations of the claims and/or the references with regard to other claimed features, Applicants choose not to

Applicant(s): RIPPKE et al.
Appl. No. 10/727,552

discuss each such feature. Consequently, the lack of explicit discussion is not to be understood as indicating tacit agreement with such characterizations.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

/Jeffrey W. Gluck/

Date: July 18, 2006

Jeffrey W. Gluck, Ph.D.
Registration No. 44,457
VENABLE LLP
P.O. Box 34385
Washington, D.C. 20043-9998
Telephone: (202) 344-4000
Direct Dial: (202) 344-8017
Telefax: (202) 344-8300